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# Physical activity patterns in Ontario



## Fitness Ontario En forme

**A Research Report from the  
Ministry of Culture and Recreation**



Ontario

Ministry of  
Culture and  
Recreation

Sports and Recreation Branch

Hon. Reuben C. Baetz  
Minister  
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Deputy Minister

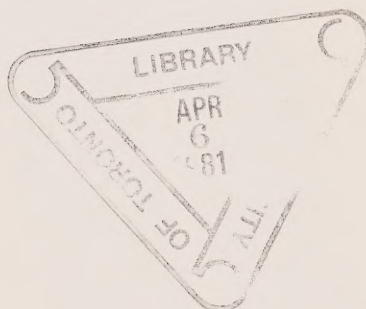




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February 1981

It is my pleasure to make public this report on physical activity in Ontario.

The report documents three major surveys commissioned by my Ministry. They examined the amount and type of physical activity engaged in by adults in the province, reasons for participation and non-participation, plans for activity, forms of encouragement and many related issues.

As an update to information in this report, I want to note that preliminary data for activity during 1980 has just been made available to the Ministry and is currently being analyzed.

Activity levels have increased in both June and November '80 surveys. While the researchers suggest this indicates a gradual increase in activity trends over the past two years, the largest recent increases were reported by people who are active three times a week or more. Those active once a week remained about the same.

While this appears to be encouraging news, what does this report and the most recent information suggest? It may be that the "easy" part for the fitness movement is over, the majority of people are aware of the need for regular physical activity and support the concept. The challenge for the '80's will be threefold:

- to encourage the already active to increase the quality and frequency of their activity,
- to support those people who are starting out so they can adhere to their own activity programs,
- to encourage those thinking about fitness to make and keep a commitment to an active lifestyle.

I trust the report will be informative and helpful to you. Should you wish additional information, please consult my staff at Fitness Ontario or your local field office of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation.

Yours sincerely,

Reuben C. Baetz  
Minister





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Acknowledgements

- . Data analysis and interpretation, and preparation of the report were done by Dr. Peter Dean of the Lawler/Dean partnership.
- . Data collection and computer analysis of the raw data were carried out by the Canadian Gallup Poll Ltd. through their Ontario Omnibus Surveys.
- . Questionnaires for the surveys discussed in these reports were developed by Burt Perrin of the Ministry of Culture & Recreation; identification of the necessary statistical analyses was also done by him.



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#### DEFINITION OF TERMS:

- . PARTICIPANTS      - those who have participated in a physical activity at least once in the previous month (1 time per month).
- . ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS      - those who have participated at least once a week within the previous month (1 time per week or more).
- . NON-PARTICIPANTS      - those who have not participated at all during the previous month (less than 1 time per month).
- . NON-ACTIVES      - non-participants plus others who have not participated at least once per week (less than 1 time per week).

#### MAJOR ASPECTS OF ACTIVITY PATTERNS:

This study concentrates on the following major aspects of participation in physical activity:

- . how frequently people engage in physical activity
- . what types of activities they engage in
- . how long they participate
- . whether they feel they get sufficient physical activity or not
- . reasons for not being active
- . plans to become active
- . when they first became active
- . how consistent their exercise patterns are
- . what would encourage them to be active or more active
- . what information on fitness they would like
- . opinions on government sponsorship of fitness programs



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#### METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The findings in this report are based upon data collected by the Canadian Gallup Poll Ltd. for the Ministry of Culture & Recreation. Data was obtained through the Ontario Omnibus Surveys carried out in November 1979, June 1979, and November 1978. Approximately 1100 adults randomly selected across Ontario were interviewed for each survey. Appendix I contains a profile of the sample.

#### CAUTIONARY NOTE

The data collected in these surveys, while of the highest quality possible, must still be treated with a degree of caution. The picture portrayed is a provincial profile of activity patterns in Ontario and is accurate at this general level of description. Those looking for major findings should concentrate on large differences in percentage figures. Due to the size of the sample, small differences of, say 5% between figures based on 2 samples of 500 people are probably not statistically significant. Similarly, differences of less than 10% between two groups of size 200 are not significant.

Furthermore, trends discussed in this report only cover a one year period; thus they may not be representative of trends over longer periods of time.





## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

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- . The 70s boom in physical activity seems to be levelling off - there has been only a very slight increase, if any, in participation over the past year.
- . About half the population of adults participate - most at least once a week. They seem to be becoming slightly more active.
  - Of the remainder, 19% are physically unable;
  - 21% don't have enough free time or have no opportunity;
  - 7% have no need.
- . Participants tend to be younger people, with more education, working in high income occupations.
- . Non-participants are older people and those with less education and low incomes.
- . The most popular year-round activities are:
  - . walking
  - . general exercise
  - . jogging/running
  - . swimming
  - . bicycling
- . Some activities are seasonal.
- . Males tend to engage in a wider variety of activities than do females; younger people engage in more strenuous activities.
- . Half of the population feel they get sufficient physical activity. This doesn't depend on whether or not they participate. However, those who participate but are not very active feel they should get more.
- . The main reasons people are not active are lack of time and no opportunity. 19% of the population are physically unable.





- . Of those not active, 51% are definitely planning to become active or would like to. 71% of those who feel they should get more activity are planning or would like to become active.
- . Support of family and friends and availability of facilities are the most important sources of encouragement to begin or to continue participating. Awards and incentives are, in general, not at all important (except for some participants engaged in competitive activities).
- . Most people are interested in obtaining information on fitness. They prefer specific information on fitness, nutrition, life style and health to general information.
- . 80% of the population feel the sponsorship of programs to encourage people to become more active is either an essential or appropriate activity of the Ontario government.

#### Update ---- February, 1981

- . Just as this report went to print, new information for activity patterns in June and November of 1980 were made available.
- . While the data is still being analyzed, a gradual increase in activity levels seems to be the trend over the period November '78 to November '80. Not the boom of the mid-'70's by any means but less of the levelling-off that seemed to be indicated upto November 1979.
- . That said, it must be noted that the largest activity increases in '80 were reported by people who are active three times a week or more. Those active once a week remained about the same.
- . The data does indicate some success but as the Minister's comments suggest, the hard work is about to begin.
- . Reporting and analyzing data such as fitness activity patterns is an on-going process. The Ministry will produce a short summary of the 1980 data as soon as a full analysis and commentary is completed and can be printed.



## IMPLICATIONS

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The major findings of these surveys suggest a number of implications for those planning, promoting or delivering physical activity services. The following topics should serve as a stimulus to discussion, creative solutions, and action.

### Non-Participants

- . While about half of the population participate in some form of physical activity, there are at least 30% who don't who would like to - especially if they could find more free time or had more opportunities. This group may be a prime target for promotional strategies.

### Increase In Activity

- . Many participants feel they should become more active - even those who are already quite active. There are opportunities here to increase the frequency, intensity and duration of physical activity. Less active participants would appear to be a target group for promoting increased involvement.

### Quality of Activity

- . While many people are active, we must question the quality of activity. 36% of the population walk. However, only one third of these walk for over an hour - another third walk for less than half an hour. While walking is better than no activity at all, encouraging walkers to become more actively involved might be an appropriate strategy.

### Promotional Strategies

- . The younger, more educated people having higher incomes appear to be aware of the benefits of physical activity and are more likely to have become active. The others (older, less educated, or having lower incomes) tend to either feel they get enough activity or feel they don't need it. It appears that the general fitness message has reached only part of the population and since the fitness boom appears to have levelled off, has accomplished its purpose. This suggests that future promotional strategies might be aimed at each of these groups.
- . A two-part promotional strategy is one approach that might be considered - one for those who participate, stressing the benefits of increasing the quality and quantity of participation; the other for the non-participants who either have not heard the message, feel it is not for them, or feel they are active enough.





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- . It may be appropriate to consider even more specific approaches in developing fitness promotional strategies, aimed at specific target groups. These approaches should consider the needs of specific groups and alternative communication channels (e.g. housewives through grocery stores, seniors through community programs, non-participants through physicians).
  - . Promotional strategies should address the fact that many people either feel they have no time or lack opportunities and that the strongest source of encouragement for participation comes from family and friends.







In the 70s, many people became more aware of their need for physical activity - partially to counter the stress of modern living - partially, and more basically, because they felt more alive physically and mentally. People became more committed to a healthier way of life. The increase in participation in jogging and running, in cycling both for pleasure and as a means of transport, is all part of this fitness revolution.

While there has been much discussion on this increased awareness and participation, there has been relatively little solid information until recently on who is participating (and who is not), why and how they participate, and in what kinds of activities.

These surveys commissioned by Fitness Ontario, of the Ministry of Culture & Recreation, are designed to provide this solid information so that those engaged in the planning, promotion and delivery of physical fitness in Ontario can better serve those who participate now or wish to become involved.



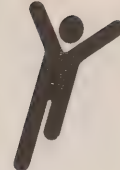
TABLE 1

PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

FREQUENCY OF ACTIVITY	Nov. '79	Jun. '79	Nov. '78
At			
3 Times a Week (a)	29%	32%	26%
1 Times a Week (b)	21%	20%	23%
1 Times a Month (c)	5%	6%	7%
Have not Participated:	44%	42%	44%
Participants <sup>1</sup> (abc)	56%	58%	56%
Active			
Participants (ab)	50%	52%	49%
Number of Cases	1099	1067	1033

1 See also definitions of these terms on page ii.





A preliminary look at participation in physical activity and those who participate will set the stage for understanding the non-participants - a possible target group for promotion strategies.

### Participation in Physical Activity

Respondents in the survey were asked what types of physical activity, physical exercise or physical recreation they had engaged in within the last month. They were asked how many times they engaged in each activity mentioned. The number of times was totalled across all activities and converted to times per week or month<sup>1</sup> in order to categorize frequency of participation.

As Table 1 shows, over half the respondents participated in some form of physical activity during the month prior to the survey. Most of these were active at least once a week or more. (Of those participating, over 90% were active participants). This pattern is consistent over the three surveys, with a slight increase in the June 1978 survey which is probably due to seasonal variations. Although not statistically significant, there is a suggestion that people may be becoming slightly more active. While the number of non-participants has not changed from Nov. '78 to Nov. '79, the number who are active at least 3 times a week has increased slightly from 26% to 29%, with a corresponding drop in the percent who participate less than 3 times a week.

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1 The following conversion was used:

<u>Times per month</u>	<u>Frequency of Activity</u>
13 or more	At least 3 times a week
4 - 12	1 time a week
1 - 3	1 time a month



TABLE 2

WHEN ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS BECAME ACTIVE

WHEN BECAME PHYSICALLY ACTIVE	Percent of Active Participants		
	Nov. '79	Jun. '79	Nov. '78
More Than a Year Ago	85%	74%	81%
Within the Last 7-12 Months	5%	6%	5%
Within the Last 6 Months	10%	20%	14%
Number of Cases	531	517	474





If the increase in the number of people who are participating is levelling off, it appears that those who participate are doing so more frequently.

The pattern of participation in Ontario is consistent with the generally held opinion that the 1970s "boom" in physical activity is reaching a plateau. Whether this is a temporary levelling off or whether as many people as can be expected are participating as a result of general promotional campaigns by, for example, Fitness Ontario or Participaction remains to be seen. (See B.Perrin. Survey of Physical Activity in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Recreation Research Review, Vol 6. No. 4, Feb. 1979, p. 49.)

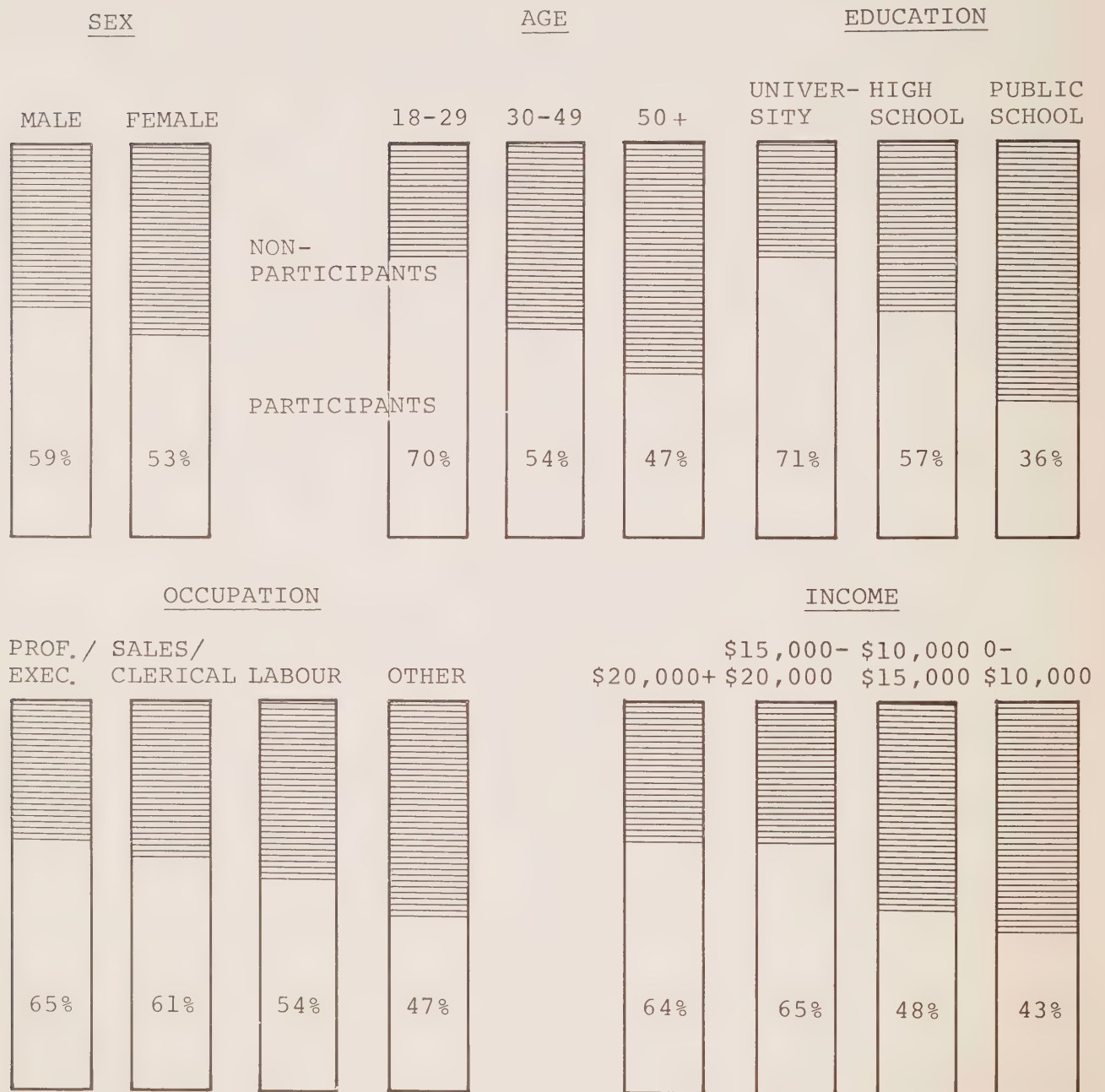
Another indication of the levelling off in participation is seen when active participants are asked when they became physically active on a regular basis.

Although not statistically significant, Table 2 suggests that in Nov.'79, more people became active than a year earlier in Nov.'78. The percentage who started within the last 6 months has decreased from 14% in Nov. '78 to 10% in Nov. '79. The drop to 74% in June '79 is difficult to explain, and may be due to sampling error, seasonal variations, or other factors.



FIGURE I

PERCENT PARTICIPANTS (bottom) &  
NON-PARTICIPANTS (top)  
November, 1979





Participants in the survey were classified according to the following descriptive and demographic factors:

- . sex
- . age
- . education
- . occupation
- . income
- . region of Ontario
- . community size

Slightly more men (59%) than women (53%) reported participating in physical activity. This 6% difference, while statistically significant, is not large. While a similar difference was found in the study carried out in Waterloo in 1977 (see Appendix III) there was no difference found in the two previous surveys (June '79 and Nov. '78).

In general, as Figure 1 shows, participants tend to be:

- . in the younger age range
- . with more education
- . working in professional/executive or sales/clerical positions, and
- . having higher incomes.

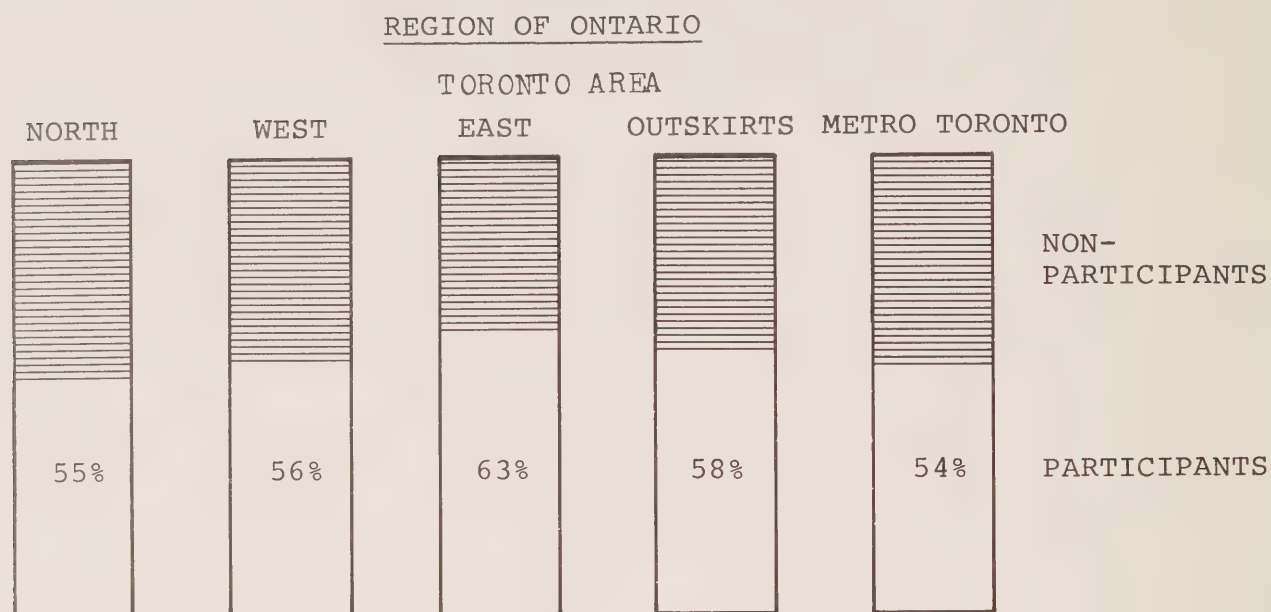
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\*Unless otherwise noted, all results in the remainder of this report refer to the Nov. '79 survey only.

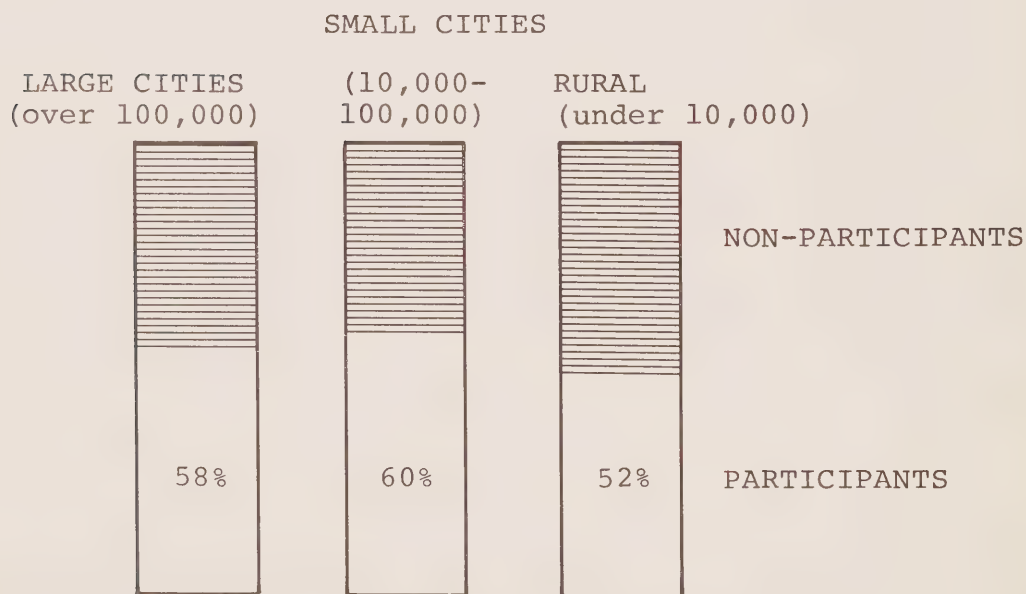




FIGURE 2



COMMUNITY SIZE



Total of three surveys - Nov. '79, Jun. '79, Nov. '78.



In terms of region of the province, there are no clear-cut distinctions with regard to participation in physical activity across the three surveys.\* Therefore, data from the three were combined. Figure 2 shows that there is a slightly higher percentage of participants in the Eastern region (likely due to high activity in Ottawa), followed by the region on the outskirts of Metro Toronto. The other three regions - the North, the West and Metro Toronto are all very similar. In general, there are no large disparities across regions of the province.

Similarly as shown in Figure 2, there are no large differences in participation across different community sizes. Participation appears to be slightly higher in larger communities. Again, the data has been combined across the three surveys.

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\*The rank orderings of activity per regions differed slightly for each survey, due probably to sampling error.



TABLE 2A

AVERAGE LENGTH OF TIMEENGAGED IN EACH ACTIVITY

AVERAGE TIME ENGAGED:	% OF PARTICIPANTS			
	ALL ACTIVITIES	WALKING	JOGGING/ RUNNING	SQUASH
0 - 15 Min.	10%	8%	16%	-
16 - 30 Min.	19%	29%	42%	6%
31 - 60 Min.	24%	32%	19%	65%
over 60 Min.	46%	31%	19%	29%

(555 Participants engaging in 991 activities)





Looking only at those people who participate at least once a week or more (ie: active participants) almost two-thirds of the youngest (18-29 years) and the oldest (50 years plus) are active three or more times a week, while less than half the 30-49 year old group are active this often. This may be because the older and younger people have more time available (see p. 19).

46% of the times people engaged in activities, they did so for over 60 minutes. A quarter of the people engaged in activities for between half an hour and an hour. These data of course depend on the type of activity. For example, the majority of times people played squash, they spent between 31 and 60 minutes (probably because court time is usually 40 minutes). For walking however, the average time spent varied considerably -- very few spent less than 15 minutes and about 30% walked for either 16-30, 31-60 or over 60 minutes.

The majority (85%) of active participants became active more than a year ago, and when asked to describe how they exercise, over half (58%) said they have adopted a consistent pattern of exercise. About a quarter (26%) described their pattern as seasonal while (16%) said they exercised irregularly. As might be expected, those who were more active (at least three times a week) tended to exercise more consistently (67%), compared to those who were active 1-2 times a week (46%).

There were no male/female differences in exercise patterns. However, both younger and older active participants were quite consistent (about 60% of respondents), while the middle-aged tended to be less consistent with more emphasis on seasonal activities.



TABLE 3

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES	PERCENT OF PARTICIPANTS (Ranking)		
	Nov. '79	Jun. '79	Nov. '78
Walking	36% (1)	26% (1)	34% (1)
General Exercise	21% (2)	17% (5)	19% (2)
Jogging/Running	16% (3)	18% (4)	14% (3)
Skating/Hockey	15% (4)	4% (11)	13% (4)
Swimming/Scuba	12% (5)	20% (3)	11% (5)
Bowling	9% (6)	5% (10)	10% (6)
Bicycling	7% (7)	23% (2)	8% (7)
Tennis/Badminton	6% (8)	13% (7)	4% (10)
Ping-Pong			
Weightlifting	6% (9)	4% (12)	3% (13)
Squash/Racquetball	5% (10)	2% (18)	3% (11)
Handball			
Dancing	5% (11)	2% (15)	6% (8)
Basketball/Volleyball	5% (12)	3% (14)	4% (9)
Gardening	3% (13)	11% (8)	-
Curling	3% (14)	10% (20)	3% (11)
Rugby/Football	3% (15)	2% (16)	3% (14)
Golf	2% (16)	7% (9)	2% (15)
Yoga	2% (17)	1% (19)	1% (16)
Baseball	1% (18)	13% (6)	-
Boating/Fishing	1% (19)	4% (12)	-
Soccer	1% (20)	2% (16)	1% (17)
Other	5%	7%	14%
Number of Cases	613	614	645

Note 1. A participation rate of 1% means that approximately 31,000 people in the province are taking part in that activity. See cautionary note regarding interpretation of small percentages.

Note 2. An individual may participate in more than one activity; thus totals are greater than 100%.



Participants engage in a wide variety of physical activities. Walking is the most popular activity. More than a third of the participants walk - especially in the fall. This drops to about a quarter of the participants in the late spring - presumably because of better weather and more opportunities for outdoor activities.

The top five year-round activities are walking, calisthenics, jogging/running, swimming and bicycling, in order of popularity. The popularity of activities is of course seasonal. Skating/hockey is very popular in the late fall (and presumably more so in winter), while bicycling is the second most popular activity in late spring.

Table 3 shows all activities listed in order of popularity as of Nov. '79 together with their rankings on all three surveys. By comparing the rankings of the Jun. '79 survey with the two Nov. surveys (which are remarkably similar), the seasonal patterns can be seen. Baseball, 18th in the fall, is 6th in the late spring.

The information in Table 3 gives only part of the picture. Because of the timing of the surveys, participants were asked for the activities they engaged in from mid-October to mid-November and mid-May to mid-June. These periods could be considered transitional times for seasonal activities. This is probably the reason why curling is as popular as gardening.

Activities which have roughly the same rankings could be considered year-round activities, i.e.: tennis/badminton/Ping-Pong. The ordering of activities in the bottom half of the listing should be interpreted with caution (1% of the sample is roughly 6 participants).





TABLE 4

AGE AND SEX DIFFERENCES IN ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES	OVERALL	Sex		Age		
		MALE	FEMALE	18-29	30-49	50+
Walking	36%	28%	44%	25%	30%	60%
General Exercise -Calisthenics	21	11	32	22	20	22
Jogging/Running	16	21	8	20	17	6
Skating/Hockey	15	21	8	23	17	-
Swimming	12	10	14	13	13	9
Bowling	9	8	9	9	9	9
Bicycling	7	4	9	5	9	6
Tennis/Badminton Ping Pong	6	7	4	8	8	-
.....						
Weightlifting	6	10	-	9	5	2
.....						
Gardening	3	2	4	1	-	10



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For some of the activities, there is a large age and sex difference. For example, 44% of the female participants walk, compared to 28% of the male participants. Sixty percent of those over 50 walk, while only 25% of those 18 - 29 walk. Swimming is the third most popular activity with women, while for men it is tied for fifth place with weightlifting (no women reported engaging in weightlifting).

Males tend to engage in a wider variety of activities. Only 39% of men engage in walking or general exercise, compared to 76% of women. Not surprisingly, younger people tend to engage in the more strenuous activities - 56% of the younger participants engage in jogging/running, skating/hockey or swimming, while only 15% of those 50 and over do so.



TABLE 5

DO PEOPLE FEEL THEY GET SUFFICIENT ACTIVITY?

SUFFICIENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?	PERCENT OF POPULATION	TOTAL TIMES ACTIVE			NON- PARTICIPANT
		3 TIMES A WEEK	1 TIME A WEEK	1 TIME A MONTH	
Get Sufficient	51%	57%	44%	42%	51%
Should get more	49%	43%	56%	58%	49%
Number of Cases	1055	317	232	53	446





Half the people surveyed (51%) feel that they do get sufficient activity. More males (54%) than females (43%) feel this way. This is consistent with the findings on participation. However, 61% of those people 50 years and older feel they get sufficient activity, while only 43% have participated at all (they also participate for shorter amounts of time).

Of the non-participants (Table 5), again about half (51%) feel they should get more activity. There is no difference between non-participants and participants on this aspect. However, of those active less than 3 times a week, more feel they should get more activity. This group would appear to be a prime target for those promoting physical activity. In terms of the overall population of Ontario, 20% have not participated within the previous month and feel they should get more physical activity. When we consider that the adult population of Ontario is 5.6 million, we are talking about over one million people.

When asked about their plans to become active, 24% of the non-active who felt they should get more physical activity were definitely planning to become more involved - an additional 47% would like to become more involved. Thus over 70% of those not active are predisposed to becoming more involved (13% said they were physically unable).

Of those participating one to three times a month, 58% feel they should get more activity.



TABLE 6

REASONS FOR NOT BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

REASON	PERCENT NOT ACTIVE	Sex		Age		
		MALE	FEMALE	18-29	30-49	50-
Don't have enough free time	34%	38%	31%	38%	46%	20%
Physically unable	19%	18%	20%	12%	10%	31%
Need more encouragement	14%	10%	17%	16%	16%	10%
No need	13%	18%	9%	12%	8%	18%
Have tried, but find it difficult	11%	6%	15%	19%	10%	9%
No opportunity	9%	9%	8%	8%	13%	5%
Other	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%	5%
None	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%
Number of Cases	508	233	274	107	191	204

Percentages total over 100% due to multiple responses.



Those who were active less than four times a month were asked the main reasons for not being more active. Almost a fifth of them said they were physically unable. As expected, these were mainly people 50 years and over. Many said they "didn't have enough free time" or had "no opportunity". The rest either "needed more encouragement" (14%), "had tried, but found it difficult to keep up" (11%), or said they had "no need for physical activity" (13%). Time and opportunity then, appear to be the main reasons people do not participate as much as they might like.

Table 6 shows the percent of those not active for each reason for the sex and age groups.

There are some sex differences - females (17%) feel they need more encouragement than males (10%); more males (18%) feel they have no need for physical activity than females (9%).



TABLE 7

PLANS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BY PERCEIVED NEED

PLANS ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	TOTAL NON-ACTIVES	GET SUFFICIENT ACTIVITY	SHOULD GET MORE
Definitely Planning	19%	13%	24%
Would Like to Take Part	32%	18%	47%
Definitely Not Interested	25%	38%	14%
Physically Unable	17%	18%	13%
Other/None apply	7%	12%	2%
Number of Cases	466	226	240





Those not active were asked their plans to become more active.

More than half said they were either definitely planning to become more active (19%) or they would like to (32%) (Table 7). Of those who feel they should get more physical activity, 71% are definitely planning or would like to become more active. Less than a third (31%) of those who feel they get sufficient activity are definitely planning or would like to become more active.

Of those not interested (25%), the majority feel they get enough activity.

These findings have major implications for the promotion of physical activity. The majority of those wishing to become more active are predisposed - all they need is the opportunity or encouragement. The majority of those not interested feel they get enough.

In terms of age groups, 79% of the younger group are definitely planning or would like to become more active, compared to 60% of the middle age group and only 28% of the older group. 32% of the older group are definitely not planning to become more active, and 30% indicate that they are physically unable.

By inference, then, those who are not predisposed are probably the older people.



TABLE 8

SOURCES OF ENCOURAGEMENT

(All Respondents)

ENCOURAGEMENT	VERY IMPORTANT (4)	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT (3)	NOT VERY IMPORTANT (2)	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT (1)	AVERAGE
Family & Friends	29%	<u>34%</u>	15%	22%	2.69
Facilities	<u>36%</u>	21%	15%	27%	2.66
Information	22%	<u>33%</u>	17%	28%	2.49
Organized Programs	22%	26%	20%	<u>32%</u>	2.39
Community Activities/ Events	14%	30%	21%	<u>35%</u>	2.24
Awards, Incentives	9%	18%	25%	<u>47%</u>	1.90



All people surveyed were asked the importance of various forms of encouragement in beginning or increasing their participation. Table 8 shows the importance attached to each of six forms of encouragement. The most important forms are "the encouragement and support for exercise from family and friends" and "more convenient facilities for exercise." "Suggestions and information regarding how to take part in exercise and its benefits" is seen as somewhat less important. "Organized programs or exercise classes" and "community activities or events (such as Fun Runs)" are seen as being not very important, while "awards and incentives for participation" are viewed as not at all important.

The ordering of these forms of encouragement has clear implications for strategies for getting people involved.



TABLE 9

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STRATEGIES FOR ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION

- Family & Friends - overall "important"
- . more important to females
  - . younger people - not older
  - . not important to public school education
    - . low income
    - . other occupations
- Facilities - overall "important"
- . no sex differences
  - . more important to younger people
  - . not important to "other" occupations
    - . public school education
    - . low income
  - . seen as more important for bicyclists and people who participate in organized activities (tennis & hockey)
- Information - overall "somewhat important"
- . more important for females, younger people & younger sales/clerical & labour occupation
  - . not important for public school education
  - . important for joggers/runners
- Organized Programs - overall "not very important"
- . more important for females or younger people
  - . not important to "other" occupations
    - . public school education
    - . low incomes
  - . more important for organized activities
- Community Activities - overall "not very important"  
/Events
- . no sex difference
  - . more important for older people
  - . not important for public school education
    - . low incomes
  - . activities - important to those participating in jogging/running, hockey/skating
- Awards & Incentives - overall "not at all important"
- . definitely not important for older people
  - . slightly more important for younger people
  - . no sex differences
  - . slightly more important for labourers
  - . activities - important for those participating in jogging/running & competitive sports (hockey/ basketball)





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Table 9 gives a type of profile for each of the forms of encouragement. The patterns in this table are quite consistent. The forms of encouragement are more for younger people, and less so for the older ones. This is probably because the older people are either unable to participate, are definitely not interested or feel that they get sufficient activity. Thus, for older people, these forms of encouragement are not likely to be effective.

Also, these forms of encouragement are less important for those with less education and lower income. These people are generally less interested in physical activity than are others.



TABLE 10

SOURCES OF ENCOURAGEMENT

(non-actives only)

FORM OF ENCOURAGEMENT	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	AVERAGE
Family and Friends	22%	29%	15%	30%	2.45
Facilities	27%	17%	16%	35%	2.36
Information	17%	27%	16%	34%	2.29
Organized Programs	17%	21%	18%	38%	2.19
Community Activities	11%	23%	20%	41%	2.04
Awards & Incentives	7%	15%	23%	51%	1.76



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As table 10 shows, any form of encouragement is mainly "not at all important" for people who are not active. Of interest is the finding that the order of popularity of these forms of encouragement is the same as for the population as a whole (see Table 8.)

If we look closer at people who are not active and divide them into those who are "definitely planning" to become involved or "would like to" and into those who are "definitely not planning" or who are "physically unable", we see again no change in the overall order - the forms of encouragement are simply more important for those with plans and less important for those without.



TABLE 11

INTEREST IN OBTAINING INFORMATION

DEGREE OF INTEREST IN OBTAINING INFORMATION ON:	VERY (4)	SOMEWHAT (3)	NOT VERY (2)	NOT AT ALL (1)	AVERAGE
Fitness & Nutrition	32%	<u>35%</u>	15%	18%	2.83
Fitness/Lifestyle Health	32%	<u>35%</u>	14%	18%	2.82
General Fitness	25%	<u>34%</u>	18%	21%	2.64
Specific Activities	21%	<u>31%</u>	21%	25%	2.50





Overall, people are "somewhat" interested in obtaining information on physical activity (Table 11). Most people would like information on either "fitness and nutrition" or on "fitness, lifestyle and health". Fewer people wanted information on "general fitness" probably because this category was not specific enough, or they thought this would be included in the information on fitness and nutrition or lifestyle. Information on "how to take part in specific activities" was seen as slightly less important, and would probably depend on the activities in which the person was involved.

Again, people who are not active, who are unable or who definitely don't plan to become more active, don't want information.

Specific information on fitness (nutrition and/or lifestyle and health) was of more interest to females and younger people, and definitely not to people with less education, and in low income jobs, as well as the older people.



TABLE 12

ONTARIO GOVERNMENT SPONSORSHIP

SPONSORSHIP	PERCENT OF POPULATION	ACTIVE (per week)		NOT ACTIVE
		3 TIMES	1 TIME	
Essential	32%	39%	36%	26%
Appropriate	48%	48%	50%	47%
Inappropriate	14%	9%	10%	21%
Don't Know/ Not Stated	5%	4%	5%	7%
Number of Cases	1106	322	236	541



One-third of the respondents (32%) feel that the sponsorship of programs to encourage people to become more active is an essential activity of the Ontario government. An additional 48% feel that it is an appropriate activity. Only 14% felt that it was inappropriate. Older people feel that it is less appropriate, as do people who are less active. There are no strong regional differences or differences due to the community size.

In summary, 80% of the population feel that government sponsorship is either essential or appropriate.







APPENDICES

- I. Profiles
  - A. Seniors
  - B. Women
- II. Sample Characteristics
- III. Other Relevant Surveys
- IV. Questionnaire



## APPENDIX I. PROFILES

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### A. SENIORS

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FOR purposes of this study, Seniors are those  
50 and over.

	<u>SENIORS</u>	(Nov. '79) <u>SAMPLE</u>
<u>PARTICIPATION</u>	(N=362)	(N=1099)
Participate	43%	56%
Haven't participated	57%	44%
 <u>TOTAL TIMES ACTIVE *</u> (AT LEAST:)		
3 Times a week	60%	52%
1 Time a week	33%	38%
1 Time a month	7%	9%
 <u>ACTIVITIES *</u> (Ranked)		
Walking	60% (1)	36% (1)
General Exercise	22% (2)	21% (2)
Gardening	10% (3)	3% (13)
Swimming	9% (4)	12% (5)
Bowling	8% (5)	9% (6)
Jogging/Running	6% (6)	16% (3)
Bicycling	6% (7)	7% (7)

\* Participants only

# SENIORS



	<u>SENIORS</u>	<u>(Nov. '79) SAMPLE</u>
<u>SUFFICIENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</u>		
Get sufficient	61%	51%
Should get more	39%	49%
<u>REASONS FOR NOT BEING ACTIVE #</u>		
Physically unable	31%	19%
Not enough free time	20%	34%
No need	18%	13%
Need more encouragement	10%	14%
Have tried, but find it difficult	9%	11%
No opportunity	5%	9%
<u>PLANS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY #</u>		
Definitely planning	9%	19%
Would like to take part	19%	32%
Definitely not interested	32%	25%
Physically unable	30%	17%

- \*fewer seniors participate than other age groups
- \*however, those that do, are more active, but for shorter periods of time
- \*60% of seniors walk
- \*61% feel they get sufficient activity
- \*many (31%) are physically unable, and many (32%) are definitely not interested in becoming more active.

#Non-active only



## APPENDIX I. PROFILES

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### B. WOMEN

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	<u>WOMEN</u>	<u>(Nov. '79) SAMPLE</u>
<u>PARTICIPATION</u>		
Participate	53%	56%
Haven't Participated	47%	44%
<u>TOTAL TIMES ACTIVE*</u> (AT LEAST:)		
3 Times a Week	52%	53%
1 Time a Week	40%	38%
1 Time a Month	8%	9%
<u>ACTIVITIES (RANKED)*</u>		
Walking	44% (1)	36% (1)
General Exercise	32% (2)	21% (2)
Swimming	14% (3)	12% (5)
Jogging/Running	9% (4)	16% (3)
Bowling	9% (5)	9% (6)
Bicycling	9% (6)	7% (7)
Hockey/Skating	8% (7)	15% (4)

\* Participants only



# WOMEN



	<u>WOMEN</u>	<u>(Nov. '79) SAMPLE</u>
<u>SUFFICIENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</u>		
Get Sufficient	43%	51%
Should get more	57%	49%

## REASONS FOR NOT BEING ACTIVE+

Not enough free time	31%	(1)	34%	(1)
Physically unable	20%	(2)	19%	(2)
Need more encouragement	17%	(3)	14%	(3)
Have tried, but find it difficult	15%	(4)	11%	(5)
No need	9%	(5)	13%	(4)
No opportunity	8%	(6)	9%	(6)

## PLANS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY+

Definitely planning	20%	19%
Would like to take part	35%	32%
Definitely not interested	22%	25%
Physically unable	16%	17%

- \*slightly fewer women participate, but are about as active as men
- \*they participate for slightly shorter periods
- \*76% walk or engage in general exercise
- \*they appear to engage in a narrower range of activities
- \*fewer feel they get sufficient activity

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+ Non-active only



## APPENDIX II. SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

NOV. '79

ONTARIO TOTAL _____	NUMBER	PERCENT
	1106	100%
<u>REGION:</u>		
Toronto	353	32
Metro Outskirts	158	14
Eastern Ontario	188	17
Western Ontario	298	27
Northern Ontario	110	10
<u>AGE:</u>		
18 to 29 years	342	31
30 to 49 years	389	35
50 years and over	364	33
Did not state	12	1
<u>SEX:</u>		
Male	548	50
Female	557	50
<u>COMMUNITY SIZE:</u>		
500,000 and over	403	37
100,000 to 500,000	230	21
30,000 to 100,000	88	8
1,000 to 30,000	157	14
Rural, farm and non-farm	228	21
<u>EDUCATION:</u>		
Public school or less	158	14
High School	779	70
University	167	15
Did not state	2	*
<u>OCCUPATION:</u>		
Professional/Executive	239	22
Sales/Clerical	141	13
Labour	430	39
Other	275	25
Did not state	21	2
<u>INCOME:</u>		
Under \$10,000	149	14
\$10,000 to \$14,999	143	13
\$15,000 to \$19,999	158	14
\$20,000 and up	411	37
Did not state	245	22

Note: Percentages may not add exactly to 100 due to rounding.  
Exact numbers and percentages for the Nov. '78 and Jun. '79  
surveys are slightly different from those given above, due  
to variations in sampling.

\*less than 0.5%



The following lists other significant surveys which may be of interest.

Perrin, Burt. Survey of Physical Activity in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo.  
Recreation Research Review, Volume 6, No. 4  
Feb. 1979, pg. 48-52.

The Perrier Study: Fitness in America  
Perrier - Great Waters of France, Inc.  
New York, Jan. 1979.

1976 Survey of Fitness, Physical Recreation and Sport.  
Culture Statistics; Recreational Activities  
Statistics Canada Cat. 87-501 Occasional, Nov. 1978.

Longitudinal Data on the Participation of Canadians  
in Outdoor Recreation Activities: 1967 - 1976.  
Socio - Economic Research Division, Parks Canada  
SERD 77 - 15. Aug. 1977.

Tourism and Recreational Behaviour of Ontario  
Residents - 7: Profiles of Participants  
Ontario Recreation Survey,  
Queen's Park, Toronto July 1977.

National Adult Physical Fitness Survey  
President's Council on Physical Fitness  
and Sports. Washington, May 1973.



## Appendix IV Questionnaire

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### ASK EVERYONE

- 1a. What type of physical activity, physical exercise or physical recreation have you engaged in, if at all, within the last month?

( ) - DID NOT ENGAGE, GO TO Q. 2

1ST MENTION: \_\_\_\_\_

PROBE: ANY OTHERS? \_\_\_\_\_

2ND MENTION: \_\_\_\_\_

PROBE: ANY OTHERS? \_\_\_\_\_

3RD MENTION: \_\_\_\_\_

- b. FOR EACH ACTIVITY MENTIONED, ASK:  
How many times in the last month did you engage in this activity? RECORD BELOW

- c. What was the average length of time involved each time you did this activity?  
RECORD BELOW.

<u>TYPE OF ACTIVITY</u>	<u># TIMES</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
1ST MENTION		0 - 15 mins..1
		16 - 30 mins..2
		31 - 60 mins..3
_____	_____	over 60 mins..4
2ND MENTION		0 - 15 mins..1
		16 - 30 mins..2
		31 - 60 mins..3
_____	_____	over 60 mins..4
3RD MENTION		0 - 15 mins..1
		16 - 30 mins..2
		31 - 60 mins..3
_____	_____	over 60 mins..4

---

2. Do you think that you get sufficient physical activity or do you feel that you should be more active?

GET SUFFICIENT ACTIVITY.....1

SHOULD GET MORE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.....2

DON'T KNOW.....3



---

ASK QUESTIONS 3 & 4 ONLY OF THOSE WHO DID NOT  
ENGAGE OR WHO ARE NOT ACTIVE 4 OR MORE TIMES PER  
MONTH (TOTAL FOR ALL MENTIONS IN Q. 1b)

---

3. On this card are some reasons people have for not  
being physically active. Which of  
these would apply to you? HAND CARD "F"

NO NEED FOR ME TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE.....1  
HAVE TRIED IT BUT FIND IT DIFFICULT TO  
KEEP IT UP.....2  
NO OPPORTUNITY TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE.....3  
DON'T HAVE ENOUGH FREE TIME.....4  
NEED MORE ENCOURAGEMENT.....5  
PHYSICALLY UNABLE.....6  
  
OTHER (SPECIFY) \_\_\_\_\_ 7  
NONE.....8

4. Please look at this card and tell me which  
one statement would apply to you? HAND CARD "G"

DEFINITELY PLANNING ON BEGINNING SOME FORM  
OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE NEAR FUTURE.....1  
WOULD LIKE TO TAKE PART IN SOME FORM OF  
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.....2  
DEFINITELY NOT INTERESTED IN TAKING  
PART IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.....3  
PHYSICALLY UNABLE TO TAKE PART IN PHYSICAL  
ACTIVITY.....4  
  
OTHER (SPECIFY) \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
NONE.....6

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ASK QUESTIONS 5 & 6 ONLY OF THOSE WHO ARE ACTIVE "4  
OR MORE" TIMES PER MONTH (TOTAL FOR ALL MENTIONS  
IN Q. 1b)

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5. When did you become physically active on a  
regular basis? DO NOT READ LIST.

WITHIN LAST 6 MONTHS.....1  
WITHIN LAST 7 - 12 MONTHS.....2  
MORE THAN 12 MONTHS AGO.....3  
DON'T KNOW.....4





6. Which one of the statements on this card best describes the way in which you exercise.  
HAND CARD "H"

I HAVE A FAIRLY CONSISTENT PATTERN  
OF EXERCISE FROM WEEK TO WEEK.....1  
MY PATTERN OF EXERCISE TENDS TO BE IRREGULAR  
ON A WEEK BY WEEK BASIS, AS I AM ACTIVE AT  
SOME TIMES AND DO VERY LITTLE OR NONE AT ALL  
AT OTHER TIMES.....2  
I TEND TO BE MUCH MORE ACTIVE DURING SOME  
SEASONS THAN DURING THE REST OF THE YEAR.....3  
NONE.....4

ASK EVERYONE

7. Would you please tell me how important each of the following would be in encouraging you to begin or to increase your participation in physical activity? HAND CARD "I"

	VERY IMPOR- TANT	SOME WHAT IMPOR- TANT	NOT VERY IMPOR- TANT	NOT AT ALL IMPOR- TANT	D.K.
Awards, incentives for participation...	1	2	3	4	5
Community activities or events (such as Fun Runs).....	1	2	3	4	5
Encouragement & support for exercise from family and friends.....	1	2	3	4	5
Suggestions & take part in exercise, & its benefits.....	1	2	3	4	5
Organized programs or exercise classes....	1	2	3	4	5
More convenient facili- ties for exercise....	1	2	3	4	5



8. Would you please tell me how interested you would be in obtaining.....  
HAND CARD "J"

	VERY INTER- ESTED	SOME WHAT INTER- ESTED	NOT VERY INTER- ESTED	NOT AT ALL INTER- ESTED	D.K.
General fitness information?.....	1	2	3	4	5
Suggestions regarding how to take part in specific physical activities (e.g. jogging, bicycling, cross-country skiing, etc.)?.....	1	2	3	4	5
Information on fitness & nutrition?.....	1	2	3	4	5
Information on fitness, lifestyle & health?...	1	2	3	4	5

9. What is your opinion of the Ontario Government sponsoring programs to encourage people to become more physically active? Do you think it is an ... READ LIST

Inappropriate activity of government?.....1  
Appropriate activity of government?.....2  
Essential activity of government?.....3  
DON'T KNOW.....4

NOTE: This questionnarie was used for the November 1979 survey. For the November 1978 and June 1979 surveys, only questions 1a, 1b, 1c and 5 were used. Questions used to collect demographic data are not included above.



## NOTES

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